A Streetcar Named Desire Study Notes Scene 4

English Literature (High School - Great Brittain)

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A Streetcar Named Desire- Study Notes: Scene 4
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Quotation	**Character/Setting** *How is the character portrayed? Image created depending on descriptors/dialogue*	**Analysis** *Language or structural techniques? Effect? Perceptive points?*	**Contextual/Thematic Significance** *What aspects of the context does it link to in relation to themes?*
• *"[Stella… face is serene… early morning sunlight… eyes and lips… narcotized tranquility… in the face of Eastern idols]"* • *[Table is sloppy… debris of the preceding night… Stanley's gaudy pyjamas lie across the threshold]"* • *"[Blanche… spent a sleepless night… appearance entirely contrasts with Stella's… presses her knuckles nervously]"(40)*	*Stella vs. Blanche:* • *Stella's character is a magnet; attracted to the violence of the new world, in this case Stanley.* • *The previous night's event displays contrasting effects upon the two sisters, confirming that Blanche cannot survive in this society.*	• **"Serene… early morning sunlight"**- *The dragging vowel sounds create a soft and peaceful tone, which contrast with the harshness of the previous night, almost making the poker night acceptable in this world.* • **"Eyes and lips narcotized tranquility"**- *Word choice of "narcotized" suggests that she is perhaps addicted to Stanley's aggression and the violent nature of their relationship. In a negative sense, she seems to be under a trance, in order to survive the new world.* • **"Face of Eastern idols"**- *The comparison to the eastern idols further connects Stella to Stanley's world. The capitalisation of "Eastern" suggests the importance she places on Stanley's background.* • **"Sloppy…debris…Stanley's gaudy pyjamas…"**- *The contrasting semantics to highlight the aftermath caused by Stanley's destruction is climaxed through Blanche's point of view; she does not fit into this society. "Gaudy" displays overwhelming colours, which seem to blind Stella metaphorically. The "pyjamas" are representative of Stella's sexual dependence on Stanley.* • **"Sleepless… presses her knuckles"**- *Blanche experiences the aftermath of the destruction. Her sleeplessness is symbolic of her restless state.*	• **Masculinity:** *The display of the pyjamas is perhaps a way of Stanley re-asserting his power in the household after the commotion caused.* • **Society and class:** *Prejudices in the new world do not exist as much as in Blanche's world.*
• *"You'd be insane enough to come back…/ Sit down and stop yelling…"* • *"When men are drinking and playing poker anything can happen. It's always a powder keg… he was as good as a lamb when I came back…"* • *"Stanley's always smashed things… snatched off one of my slippers… smashing the light-bulbs with it… sort of thrilled by it" (41)*	*Blanche vs. Stella:* • *Where Blanche suffers the effects of Stanley's violence, Stella embraces it.* • *Blanche shies away from the light- she is fated to conform to the darkness as a result of her moth-like behaviour. Thus, she can never embrace reality amidst Stella's shining hope.*	• **"Insane enough"**- *Blanche is taken aback by Stella's actions, almost as if realisation dawns that she is not part of this new world. She is alienated, akin to the word choice of "insane," when everyone else cannot see the wrong in Stanley's actions.* • **"Powder keg… good as a lamb when I came back"**- *The "powder keg" is symbolic and reflective of Blanche's situation itself; she builds up her illusion further and further until Stanley smashes her illusion, just like smashing the light bulbs. Simile of "good as a lamb" evokes a sense of bathos as it juxtaposes his primal, predatory nature.* • **"Smashed…snatched…slippers… smashing the light bulbs"**- *Sibilance is suggestive of an underlying snake-like cunning on Stanley's part, forewarning that he can get away with anything. The action of "smashing the light bulbs is peculiar and symbolic of* • *"Not in anything I want to get out of"- Her brutal honesty through her dialogue is suggestive of her similarities to Stanley.*	• **Masculinity/ Gender roles:** *Stanley often bursts into violence and Stella is the stabilising ground upon which he can hope and survive.*

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• *"I'm not in anything I want to get out of." (42)*			
• *"Oh well, it's his pleasure, like mine is movies and bridge, People have got to tolerate each other's habits…" (42)* • *"If only… get hold of some money, that's the way out!"* • *"Shep Huntleigh… You know I went to Miami…/ No." (43)*	*Stella and Stanley vs. Blanche:* • *Stella and Stanley manage to find some balance within their marriage; where Blanche is quick to abandon her life when it resorts to violence, Stella is a stabilising force.* • *Blanche seems to place money on a pedestal even when it has let her down in the past; the fantasy she wishes to live in is a recreation of her own destruction.*	• **"His pleasure… mine is movies"**- *The possessive pronoun of "His" is suggestive of Stella's fondness towards Stanley; despite his aggression, Stella does not have to live in the illusion she was brought up in.* • **"Tolerate each other's habits"**- *Word choice of "tolerates" acts in a positive way to suggest her acceptance of his persona, just as he "pulled her down" into reality. Stella acts as a stabilising factor for Stanley's uncanny outbursts.* • **"Money, that's the way out!"**-*Inversion of "money" before the rest of the phrase echoes Blanche's cyclical panic when she loses Belle Rève. Blanche does not know a world where money was absent, suggesting the extent of damage her lifestyle caused. "Way out!" evokes a sense of pathos. The exclamation mark highlights her vulnerability, as she does not see that "way out" is an illusion for a trap.* • **"Shep Huntleigh… You know…/No"**- *The overcrowded use of rhetorical questions suggest her lack of clarity, alluding to the idea that Shep is a figment of her imagination. The nomenclature of "Shep" which refers to Shepherd brings down this figure's importance; he is perhaps not as rich as Blanche thinks.*	• **Marriage and gender roles** • **Fantasy and reality:** *Blanche cannot differentiate between fantasy and reality, thus the audience question if scenes with this character ever displayed her in a sane state, further emphasising her helplessness.*
• *"Shep… Texas is literally spouting gold in his pockets… Y'know how indifferent I am to money… in terms of what it does for you. (43)*	*Blanche's illusion:* • *It is ironic to note that Blanche wants to shy away from Stella's lifestyle, as she is dependent on Stanley, however, she will also depend on a man if she decides to reside with Shep, magnifying her hypocrisy.*	• **"Literally spouting gold in his pockets"**- *"Literally" emphasises that Blanche is perhaps not seeking love anymore, but rather, financial security; this is the only way she knows to survive.* • **"Y'know how indifferent I am to money"**- *The contraction of "Y'know" suggests her disregard towards money; though she believes this is seen in a positive light, the audience can only focus on her carelessness- thus, we feel she deserves to be in her situation.*	• **Fantasy and reality:** *Although Blanche shines the light on lies about her past, the audience involuntary focus on her prejudices. The fact that she cannot keep up her illusion already alludes to her mental instability and inability to differentiate between fantasy and reality.*
• *"Stanley doesn't give me a regular allowance, he likes to pay bills himself.. he gave me ten dollars to smooth things over." (44)* • *"Money just goes- it goes places... How could I stay here with him,*	*Stanley, power and money:* • *Money appears symbolic of power; Stanley's possessive nature suggests his need to be the 'man of the household', further suggesting the views of the time.*	• **"Doesn't give me a regular allowance"**- *Contraction of "doesn't" suggests how she is submissive to this. Word choice of "allowance" almost dumbs down Stella's importance as a wife, rather regarding her as a child. "Regular" also suggests the hard-working nature of Stanley, who utilises basic survival skills.* • **"Likes to pay bills himself… gave me ten dollars to smooth things over"**- *The idea of giving money to "smooth things" however, is almost suggestive of Stanley's fear in losing Stella; thus he is*	• **Society and class:** *Where Stanley values money and continuously keeps account of all finances, Blanche's blasé attitude towards it immediately distinguishes their different upbringings. To a current audience, Stanley seems morally superior.*

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after last night, with just those curtains between us?" (45)		*dependent on her in order to aspire to be better.* • **"Money just goes- it goes places"**- *Repetition of "goes" echoes how Belle Rève constantly haunts her. The hyphenation detaches Blanche's reality from fantasy, further distancing her fro society.* • **"Just those curtains between us?"**- *The rhetorical question forewarns the rape. The symbolism of the curtains acts as an extended metaphor; although they are supposed to mask and protect Blanche from the light, when Blanche does try to be truthful with regards to her rape, it refuses to budge and instead screens her reality, forcing her into her fantasy.*	
• *"There are things that happen… in the dark… make everything else seem-unimportant./ What you are talking about is brutal desire." (46)* • *"Streetcar… it brought me here- Where I'm not wanted…/ Don't you think your superior attitude is a bit out of place?"*	*Blanche and the present:* • *Blanche cannot accept the present as it is; she cannot come to terms with the fact that her world is gone.*	• **"Things that happen in the dark…everything else seem- unimportant"**- *The darkness contrast to Stella's shining nature, suggesting how she is drawn to Stanley's violence and the illusions he creates for sexual pleasure. The detachment of "unimportant" may allude to Blanche, who is not part of the new world.* • **"Brutal desire"**- *"Brutal" associates desire with danger and violence, all of which Stanley provides.* • **"Streetcar- brought me here"**- *The sentence structure "brought me here" is peculiar, almost as if Blanche has given up and succumbed to her fate as a result of her experiences.* • **"Your superior attitude is a bit out of place?"**- *Rhetorical question suggests Stella's anger. She seems to despise Blanche's persona as it reminds her of her background. "Superior attitude" seems alienated, akin to Blanche.*	• **Marriage and sex/Society and class**
• *[Under cover of the train's noise Stanley enters… stands unseen… holding some packages… overhears… wears an undershirt and grease-stained seersucker pants] (46)*	*Stanley and the new world:* • *Stanley is protected by the cacophony of the new world, whereas Blanche's weaknesses are exposed as she waits for the train to pass.*	• **"Under cover… train's noise"**- *"under cover" is ironic as Blanche is the one who hides in her illusion. Yet, Stanley uses noise and violence to hide what he knows about Blanche. The "train" is symbolic of the continuation of new life.* • **"Wears… undershirt… grease-stained seersucker pants"**- *Stanley's clothes foreshadow Blanche's fate. "Grease-stained" is a metaphor for how Stanley will ruin and stain Blanche's illusion, forcing her into a state where she can neither accept her reality nor escape into her fantasy.*	• **Fantasy and reality:** *Stanley is perhaps Blanche's final obstacle; it is dramatically ironic as the audience are aware that she can never overcome her reality, thus Stanley painfully demonstrates Blanche's entrapment within the past.*
• *"Acts like an animal… Eats like one, moves like one, talks like one!... sub-human- something not quite to the stage of humanity…"* • *"Stanley*	*Blanche and the new world:* • *From Blanche's monologue, the audience realises that she is entering a battle she cannot win; this monologue epitomises the idea that progress is unstoppable and it will drag Blanche down inevitably.*	• **"Acts like an animal… eats like one moves like one, talks like one!"**- *The triple imitates Stanley's cyclical transition, perhaps suggesting his violent outbursts to be unpredictable; only Stella provides hope. The explosion of truth is somewhat insulting and sets the groundwork for Blanche's downfall; Blanche practically hands Stanley the opportunity to ruin her so perhaps, she wants to escape this world.* • **"Sub-human… not quite to the stage of**	• **Masculinity/Prejudice and power/Gender roles**

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Kowalski- survivor of the Stone Age… he'll strike… grunt… kiss… swilling and gnawing and hulking…"		**humanity"**- *Her disgust/hatred for those threatening her social status is apparent through "sub-human"- the fact that she insults him when she is seeking his aid indicates how deeply affected Blanche is by her familial background.* • **"Strike…grunt… kiss… swilling and gnawing and hulking"**- *Syndetic listing seems disjointed through Blanche's continual pauses, almost as if she hesitates to insult and then grows in confidence, when she does not hold back. The "swilling" and "gnawing" result in dragging sounds almost forewarning the slow process in which he will conduct her destruction.*	
• *"My sister- there has been some progress… Such things as art- as poetry and music… kinds of new light… we have got to make grow… tender feelings."* • *"Don't- don't hang back with the brutes."* • *"[Stanley hesitates, licking his lips… he turns stealthily… train has passed he calls through the… door]"*	*Stanley vs. Blanche:* • *Though Blanche considers education and a good background to be socially superior, it does not fit into the world where Stanley is intuitive and intellectual.*	• **"Progress… poetry and music… new light… tender feelings"**- *The references to French arts are suggestive of how she wishes to "cling to" the past; there is a constant shuffling of whether Blanche is clinging on to Belle Rève or if Belle Rève has a hold on her. Symbolism of "new light" is ironic as she retreats from the truth; her light seems to be more artificial than the electric light bulbs.* • **"Don't- don't hang back with the brutes"**- *The hyphenation demonstrates the last gap of the Agrarian south. Her hysterical nature deems her ideas ridiculous.* • **"Hesitates, licking his lips… turns stealthily"**- *The fact that Stanley "hesitates" suggest that he has a conscience, but his thirst for power overrides it. The alliteration of "licking his lips" mimic a snake and is opposed by "stealthily". Perhaps he uses the ape-like image to hide his true intent until the end to Blanche.*	• **Prejudice and power:** *Blanche believes American civilisation has declined due to the dilution of white supremacy and an increase in immigration.*
• *"[Stella… embraced him… fiercely… full in the view of Blanche… He laughs and clasps her head to him… he grins through the curtains at Blanche…] (47)*	*Stella and Stanley vs. Blanche:* • *Stella's actions confirm her loyalty to Stanley, even if her conscience fights her reality later when she refuses to believe Blanche's accusations.*	• **"Embraced… fiercely… full in the view of Blanche"**- *The fierce embrace is suggestive of how she has left the old world behind and clings onto Stanley. The stage directions "full in the view of Blanche" confirm this, leaving Blanche isolated.* • **"Grins through the curtains at Blanche"**- *Word choice of "grins" is interesting to note; it holds evil connotations, thus fear for Blanche is heightened. The symbolism of "through the curtains" suggests how he has power over Blanche. Although her fate causes the curtains to screen the rape, Stanley can always taunt her with the experience, forcing her further into her fantasy.*	• **Fantasy/ Reality/ Power**
• *"[Light fades… with a lingering brightness…*	*Blanche and her sealed fate:* • *Blanche's monologue gives Stanley the*	• **"Light fades… lingering brightness"**- *The oxymoronic fading and brightening of light is suggestive of how Stanley uses the*	• **Fantasy and reality/ Marriage and sex/ Mortality and fate.**

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music of the 'blue piano' and trumpet and drums is heard]" (48)	*opportunity to break her illusion; thus it is hard to argue whether Stanley initiated the destruction or merely carried it out.*	*light to threaten to reveal the truth in the most taunting and rawest form. Thus, the personification of the light almost seems cruel on Williams' part, as Blanche retreats further into her illusion.* • **"Blue piano and trumpet and drums is heard"**- *Underscores Stanley and Stella's passion that Blanche is too weak to destroy. The music initially begins with just the blue piano in scene one, but is developed and overcrowded by other instruments as we go on, suggesting how Blanche continues to force her own downfall.*	

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